



Child Support News You Can Use

Child Support Enforcement Division
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
(DOR)
Fall 2013

Asking the court to modify your child support order

Only the court can change the amount of your child support order (called a modification). Whether you pay or receive support, you can ask us to help

you go to court to ask for a modification of your order. We may be able to help you if:

- You want to change your current child support order (to increase or decrease it, or to add an order for health care coverage for the children); and
- You are **not** asking for a change involving custody, visitation, or anything other than child or medical support for a minor child.

If you lost your job and are having trouble keeping up with your child support payments, you might want to ask for a modification.

You can use the Child Support Guidelines Worksheet on the Probate and Family Court's website to get an estimate of how much a court might order at www.mass.gov/courts/childsupport.

If you want our help with a modification, follow these steps:

1. Ask the court staff - or DOR staff - for the necessary forms.
2. Fill out the forms. Send us the forms and supporting documents that show why the court should change your order (paystubs, letters verifying benefits, etc.).

We will review the forms and documents you send us and the information we have on your case and decide if we agree that a modification of your child support order might be appropriate.

- If a modification might be appropriate, we will file the forms for you; serve the other parent and ask the court to schedule a hearing.
- If we do not agree that a modification might be appropriate, we will return the forms to you and, if you decide to go forward, you will have to file the forms with the court, serve the other parent and schedule a hearing on your own.

Customer Survey

A number of you recently received a survey about your experiences with us and our services and we thank those of you who completed and returned the survey. Overall, the responses were very positive, but they also helped identify some areas where we can improve. For example, as a result of what you told us, we are reviewing the information on our website to see if we can find ways to make it easier for you to find what you are looking for. We welcome your feedback and if you have comments or suggestions, go to the "E-mail Us" link on our home page and then click "General Comments and Inquiries" or send them to us at DOR/CSE, P.O. Box 9561, Boston, MA 02114-9561.



New Child Support Guidelines

The Massachusetts Trial Court issued new Child Support Guidelines that were effective August 1st. The guidelines are

used by Massachusetts courts to set the amount of child support orders. The guidelines apply a formula based on the parents' incomes and expenses and number of children. The guidelines help promote uniformity, consistency and fairness in the setting of child support orders across the state. The court is required to review the guidelines at least once every four years to check that the guidelines reflect the current economic climate and their application results in appropriate child support amounts. You can read more about the new guidelines on the court's website at: www.mass.gov/courts/childsupport.

Safety and Privacy

Many parents raise concerns about safety and privacy while receiving child support services. If you want your personal information to be protected, consider how much of it may be available on the web. There is a new guide on safe and private social networking from the National Network to End Domestic Violence and Facebook. Go to <http://nnedv.org/facebookprivacy> (and to www.nnedv.org for other general tech safety tips.)

Reminder...

If child support doesn't come right out of your paycheck, **DO NOT SEND CASH**. Make your child support payments by check, money order, or credit card. **Keep your cancelled check or copy of your money order as your receipt**. If you and DOR ever disagree about the payment history, you must produce the receipts as proof of payment.



ARE YOU ON SSI AND OWE CHILD SUPPORT? IF SO, DOR MAY BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.

If you receive any Supplement Security Income (SSI) and owe child support, there are a number of ways DOR can help you. For instance, if you let us know that you're on SSI and tell us the bank account where your SSI benefits are deposited, we won't levy that account. As long as you are working with us and communicating about your case, we will consider your

SSI benefits when deciding whether license suspension may be appropriate. Most importantly, we might be able to reduce the amount you owe or even close your case if you are likely to be on SSI for a long period of time. However, we can't do these things unless you contact us to let us know you're on SSI.

Credit Card Payments



In addition to accepting credit card payments online at our website, DOR now accepts child support payments by credit card over the phone or in person in any of our regional offices. DOR accepts MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express. To make a payment by phone, call 1-800-332-2733 or, in Greater Boston, call 617-660-1234. A convenience fee of 2.49% charged by the credit card companies is added to each credit card payment made over the phone or in an office. For example, if a parent calls us to charge a child support payment of \$200 to a credit card, a \$4.98 convenience fee will be added so a total of \$204.98 will be charged to the credit card.

What is my balance?

Customers often ask about their balance or how to get a statement of their account. You can get this information online or by calling us.